

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL COMPETENCY

May 19, 2021
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Video-Conference

MINUTES

Attendees: Judge Sanchez-Figueroa (Chair); Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson (Ex-Official Member), Isabel Alvarez, Juana Brown, Troy Brown, Samuel Bruder, Sandra Cardone, Lia Cestaro, Patrick (PJ) Deak, Esther Harris, Meghan Korn, Daisy Ortiz, Michaelangelo Palmieri, Philip Strambler, Spiro Uyar, and Shawna Woodard

Absent: Juanita Halepas, Cristina Johnson, Zarin Kapur, Felix Rodriguez, and Ewa Wojewodzki

Judge Sanchez-Figueroa called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

The minutes from the March 17, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved with the necessary corrections.

GAL Training Update

Lia Cestaro reported that the participant booklet was sent to the GAL Standing Committee. The curriculum is complete and ready for Lia and Zarin Kapur to co-facilitate a 2-hour session in June.

Diversity Week 2021

Sandra Cardone reported that we have a list of potential keynote speakers. She has reached out to all of them. We have two speakers who are available but they are requesting a fee. We are hoping to secure them pro bono. Judge Sanchez-Figueroa will inquire if funding is available

New Business

Lia Cestaro said one of CSSD's contracted adult programs wants to hire a transgender female. Part of the job duties is to collect urine from clients. Would there be any issue for the transgender female employee collecting urine from their female clients? The Chief asked if we may see what other agencies are doing to get some guidance. A discussion ensued about how to sensitively approach situations like this. The conversation continued to how we may ask and acknowledge people using the language and pronouns that one prefers. Lia added that the CCSD Multicultural Affairs Unit will release a 1-hour web-based training on gender identity available to all Branch employees. Recommendations were made to publish a quick card, send an e-mail, or to host a 5-minute "tiny chat" or webinar to get out our messages on cultural competency. Also, suggested to consider issuing a Branch policy regarding gender identity. Lia shared the Cultural Compass newsletter, Spring 2020 edition, and encouraged members to read pages 4 and 9 to help educate us on the language and gender identity. Judge Sanchez-Figueroa requested that this issue stays on future agendas because it is important that we address it. A Subcommittee will be formed with Human Resources.

Announcements

Judge Sanchez-Figueroa announced that Juanita Halepas will retire in June. Over her term, she has contributed so much to the committee as a member and facilitator of various training offered by the ACCC. Since Juanita was absent from this meeting, Shawna Woodard will send Judge Sanchez-Figueroa Juanita's contact information so that she may send a farewell message on behalf of the ACCC.

PJ Deak shared that The Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), with support of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), have launched a national initiative –

the *Blueprint for Racial Justice*. The ACCC should review the report to see if there is any information we may glean or learn to help advance our efforts, particularly with Diversity Week 2021.

Juana Brown recommended that the ACCC should contact the Judicial Branch's grants administrator to seek funding for a Diversity Week keynote speaker.

Daisy Ortiz asked if the ACCC or Chief Justice should make a statement to employees around the assault and hate crimes against Asian-Americans. One similar to the message that was sent after the George Floyd incident. Judge Sanchez-Figueroa will consult with Chief Justice Robinson.

Sam Bruder said that he and Isabel Alvarez recently used the ACCC's Culture Matters video to facilitate breakout sessions and conversations with the Judicial Branch interns. Isabel said her training unit will use the videos to facilitate more sessions with Branch employees. Shawna Woodard urged members to seek prior approval before using the Culture Matters video since we are limited in their use by way of the release forms that were signed by the actors in the video. If approved, the ACCC should have input in how the videos are used.

Chief Robinson reported:

- He facilitated a training for the Hartford Bar Association last evening.
- The Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) recently announced a *Blueprint for Racial Justice*. The Chief chairs the Equity Workgroup of which Judge Sanchez-Figueroa and Chief Court Administrator Judge Carroll are members.

Meghan Korn asked if other employees received the card via interoffice mail about diversity. Only a few members received it. Meghan will send Shawna a copy of the card to share. Meghan recommended that we partner with offices on endeavors such as this.

Judge Sanchez-Figueroa added that Brian Hill, Director of Human Resources Management, will join the ACCC.

The meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.